

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 6178
APPLICANT NAME: Madera Irrigation District
PROJECT TITLE: Madera Region Water Supply and Environmental Preservation Program

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$20,140,000
COST MATCH: \$55,693,250
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$75,833,250

DESCRIPTION: The MID WSEP will help MID to improve the supply reliability, reduce overdraft, and enhance the capability to complete existing surface water transfers to Root Creek Water District (RCWD) to improve their groundwater levels and reduce overdraft within RCWD. RCWD is planning to construct its In-Lieu Groundwater Recharge and Storage Project. This project would provide the facilities needed to deliver surface water from several San Joaquin River sources, including their existing agreement with MID to growers currently using groundwater. This will improve local water supply reliability, reduce groundwater overdraft, increase groundwater levels, and improve groundwater quality.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Pass

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1. 2

The applicant has not completed an IRWMP. The IRWMP is scheduled to be adopted by August 2006.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1. 3

A draft IRWMP was supplied by the applicant. The region is the applicant's service area and its sphere of influence but it is not extensive or very regional in nature. A map is provided and shows the region's boundaries and major water-related features and infrastructure, but only general land-use divisions. A rationale for why this region was chosen was provided, cooperation was identified, and a summary of land use descriptions was presented. Most of the descriptions were of planned development in the region and the need for sustainable water supplies. No qualitative information was made available regarding water quality, but a general presentation was included that outlined historical, current, and anticipated water supplies, as well as hydrogeologic conditions. No detail was provided regarding other environmental resources in the region, the social and cultural issues, or the relationship to the separate County IRWMP that is also being prepared.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1. 3

The applicant identified 4 objectives that were developed through discussions among the participating agencies. The objectives are focused on 1) long-term water supply, 2) reducing overdraft, 3) protecting environmental resources, and 4) protecting groundwater quality. Conflicts in the region were not addressed. The manner in which the objectives were determined was not identified. Major statewide priorities and objectives are presented. Some solutions for reducing conflicts in the region are provided, as well as other issues considered by the State to be priorities, such as TMDLs and beneficial use goals. The applicant discusses these ideas, but not a lot of effort was made to directly link the IRWMP to these ideas.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1. 3

The applicant lists all of the water management strategies that are considered in the IRWMP and groups them into several categories, relating them to the IRWMP's proposed projects. The applicant does a good job of integrating the water management strategies with their goals, and presents the benefits of using multiple strategies to accomplish regional goals. Overall, the applicant presented well organized ideas, but more quantitative details rather than only qualitative discussions could have been provided. Very little information is provided as to how these strategies might work together.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant presents short-term priorities, such as preserving the environmental resources of the region and completing its proposed projects, and long-term priorities including developing additional facilities and developing intra-region water transfers. In the Priorities Section, no additional information was provided. Under the Implementation heading, the applicant provides better information regarding project prioritization and scheduling. The IRWMP schedule includes three phases: ongoing water management activities, implementation of pending water management strategies, and monitoring and assessment programs. The IRWMP discusses how the projects could change, based on performance, and how the applicant could modify components of the project to achieve the IRWMP's objectives and priorities. General information is provided, but it needs to be better organized with more concise discussions and presentations. An insufficient level of analysis is provided.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Four specific projects are identified for implementation, and two of the projects, which are identified as the top priorities, have completed either feasibility studies or a draft EIR. Timelines are included, the agencies responsible for implementation of the projects are identified, and the economic and technical feasibility has been demonstrated to at least a programmatic level. However, the linkages or interdependence between all of projects is not clear. Specifically, it is unclear how the Table Mountain Rancheria Project -- which is not in the region, Madera County, or the Madera Groundwater Basin -- links with the other projects.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

2

The applicant did not provide a discussion in the IRWMP regarding potential negative impacts, but a Draft EIR for the Madera Water Supply Enhancement Project was provided as a technical appendix. The IRWMP did not summarize the EIR or reference its conclusions. The applicant stated four benefits of the IRWMP, but did not provide detail or discussions regarding distinct interregional benefits or impacts, other than the IRWMP would improve water supply and quality and raise groundwater levels, which is a very broad statement with no supporting information. No discussion of DACs was provided in the IRWMP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant states that the IRWMP is based on extensive work completed over 10 years; some feasibility reports are included as appendices. No discussion is provided regarding specific technical methods or analyses used selecting water management strategies. No data gaps were identified or discussed. The IRWMP does not present performance measures that will be used to evaluate the projects, nor does the IRWMP indicate possible modification measures. The IRWMP fails to offer an adequate discussion of the technical methods and analyses used in selection of water management strategies. A data collection and evaluation process is mentioned, but no details are given. The lack of specifics regarding the operations and implementation of adaptive management preclude full credit for this element.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Statements are made by the applicant that data will be managed and disseminated to the public, but specific mechanisms are not provided. The applicant does indicate that data, such as groundwater levels and quality and water delivery information, will be available to State agencies in an appropriate format, such as SWAMP and GAMA. The applicant provides brief information regarding existing data collection methods used by itself and the Root Creek Water District. The applicant provides maps showing the data collection locations and examples of the data collection output. No data management information is provided for the Table Mountain Rancheria project. Data collected by the Madera Ranch Oversight Committee is stated to be provided to the public, stakeholders, and State agencies. It is difficult to determine that data for all future projects and programs will be managed appropriately.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant presents a brief financial plan for IRWMP implementation and provides approximate costs for the IRWMP's proposed projects. Support for the IRWMP is presented as the RWMG. Other than Proposition 50 funds, DWR's Local Groundwater Assistance program was identified as another source of funding for projects, but no information about financing O&M costs of the proposed projects is provided. The beneficiaries of the projects are not clearly discussed.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

2

Feasibility studies are referenced in the application, but no information is provided regarding planning documents, such as City and County General Plans. The applicant did not directly link the IRWMP to local land-use planning agencies, but does indicate in the Stakeholder Involvement section that City and County agencies are interested in joining the RWMG. The dynamics between the IRWMP and existing planning documents was not discussed. It is unclear as to how the decision makers at various levels will coordinate with local land-use planning, especially since Madera County is developing a separate IRWMP. The applicant makes only a weak attempt to demonstrate coordination with local planning and management efforts.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant provided information regarding stakeholder involvement, and indicates that additional stakeholders, such as the City and County of Madera, are interested in joining the RWMG. However, the County is developing a separate IRWMP, which does not suggest coordination. A list of potential stakeholders is included in the IRWMP. A plan for ensuring public involvement is presented, which includes the participation of local, State, and federal agencies. Overall, the applicant presents the idea that other agencies are encouraged to participate in the development of the IRWMP, but the idea is not solid. No discussion of potential obstacles is presented, environmental justice concerns are not considered, and DACs are not discussed.

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

12

The applicant presents a thorough description of the two projects proposed for implementation. The proposed projects are directly linked to the objectives and goals of the IRWMP; a rationale was presented to understand its relationship to the IRWMP. The proposals are supported by lists of feasibility studies and detailed maps are provided. Good physical descriptions of the areas impacted by the projects are presented, such as water resources and land use. Environmental documentation is discussed, and an EIR has been prepared for the water supply project. While the application does a good job describing two projects, it is not clear where the source water will come from. The applicant states that currently all of its water that is not used for agricultural purposes is recharged, yet both of the proposed projects use the applicant's water as their source. It appears water is just being recharged from one area in the region into another.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

6

The two proposed projects are stated to be a high priority for the applicant and the region because of their benefits. The applicant discusses regional priorities, such as water management and water protection, and these priorities are directly linked to the IRWMP and the other projects proposed in it. Since only two projects are described and both are shown to be of a high priority, it is difficult to determine that a significant prioritization effort was undertaken.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

5

The applicant organized the projects' estimated costs per the requirements of the PSP, and further itemized construction/implementation costs. Total costs were broken into Grant Funding requests and Funding Match costs; the applicant is funding 73% of the total project costs. Text descriptions of the cost estimate were also provided with additional cost descriptions.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

5

A schedule is included that presents tentative timelines for the completion of the IRWMP and its four prioritized projects. More details are provided with approximate durations for the two projects contained in the proposal. All criteria were met for presentation of schedules.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

6

The applicant presents justification for the need of the proposed projects and the projects' benefits. Both projects discuss groundwater overdraft, water supply reliability, habitat preservation, and water quality protection, where applicable. General water history is presented, and qualitative discussions are presented regarding the impact of the proposed projects. More quantitative discussions could have been presented, such as estimations of water quality benefits and overdraft estimates. No detailed economic conditions are presented and fiscal impacts are not identified. The applicant does suggest what the negative effects would be if the projects are not implemented.

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Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

8

As a whole, nearly all the region qualifies as a DAC. The Water Supply Enhancement Project area would benefit 13,910 households with a MHI below the 80% standard. The other project would affect fewer non-DAC households (288). The water-related benefits would generally influence the entire region by constructing a better distribution system and recharging water to create higher groundwater levels. However, these benefits are not specifically aimed at DACs. While the applicant states that DACs would benefit from the project implementation, only qualitative discussions are provided with no direct quantitative support.

Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant states that two of the six program preferences will be attained: 1) integrating projects with multiple benefits and 2) supporting and improving local and regional water supply reliability. There is good information to support the projects, and the applicant presents brief qualitative information regarding project benefits. The applicant could have provided additional information that supports other program preferences, such as water quality issues. The proposal does not support how it will eliminate or significantly reduce pollution in impaired waters and sensitive habitat areas. This project has the potential to reduce exports from the San Joaquin valley, but it is not addressed in this proposal.

TOTAL SCORE: 79